50

logo design tips from the pros.

with contributions from some of the worlds most influential & talented identity designers including; Aaron Draplin, Michael Bierut, David Airey, Von Glitschka, Jacob Cass & many more!

Created by Ian Paget

Logo Geek®

Hello, my names Ian Paget, also known as Logo Geek.

I'm on a personal mission to help you become a better designer by providing you with best logo design resources, tips and advice the world has ever seen! (big goal right!?)

In this free eBook I'm giving you 50 of the best logo design tips you'll ever need, with exclusive contributions from some of the worlds most influential and awesome identity designers including; Aaron Draplin, Michael Bierut, David Airey, Von Glitschka, Jacob Cass and many more!

Don't forget to join me Twitter and/or Facebook, and read my blog to get more great logo design tips, and to keep up with the latest logo design news.
(Don't forget to say hi!)

Enjoy!

Part 1:
Before you design the logo

The tips covered across the following pages will help you to lay solid foundations before starting on the design phase.

Pro Tip 1:
Understand what a logo is, what they do and why we need them.

Logos surround us and are embedded into our culture and way of life. But what does a logo do and why do we need them? These words from design legend Paul Rand (taken from his book 'Design Form & Chaos') perfectly answers this question.

Paul Rand

A logo is an instrument of pride and should be shown at its best. If in the business of communications, "image is king," the essence of this image, the logo, is the jewel in its crown.

- *A logo is a flag, a signature, and escutcheon, a street sign.*

- *A logo does not sell (directly), it identifies.*

- *A logo is rarely a description of a business.*

- *A logo derives its meaning from the quality of the thing is symbolises, not the other way around.*

- *A logo is less important than the product it signifies; what it represents is more important than what it looks like.*

- *The subject matter of a logo can be almost anything.*

The principle role of a logo is to identify, and simplicity is its means. A design that is complex, fussy, or obscure harbors a self-destructive mechanism. No amount of literal illustration will do what most people imagine it will do. This will only make identification more difficult and the "message" more obscure. A logo, primarily, says who, not what, and that is its function

Pro Tip 2:
Develop a design process

Every successful designer has his or her own creative process.

This is rarely linear, and will often adapt and change, but for most logo designers a typical process goes something like this:

Create a Logo Design Brief
Research & Discovery Phase
Idea Generation & Design
Presentation of the Designs
Modifications & Refinements
Delivery of Logo Files

If something goes wrong with any project, don't blame the client – instead review and refine your process where needed (including your contract) to avoid the problem from happening again - aim to build your own bullet proof design process that works to your strengths.

Pro Tip 3:
Understand the project goals

A logo is not just a pretty shape that companies put on everything it does, instead it's an object that performs a function; **representing the businesses values, attracting the desired audience, and competing for attention in a vast marketplace.**

It's important to understand the business goals so you can design a solution that will perform and ultimately be successful.

Pro Tip 4:
Ask the right questions

Before working on any designs it's essential you understand what you are designing and why. Stuart at Inkbot Designs has kindly added his expert advice...

Stuart L. Crawford

If you don't know the specifics of what you're designing, then how can you effectively provide a solution to the client's problem?

Be sure to ask the client, be it face to face or via an online questionnaire, questions like:

- *Is there a unique story behind your business or name?*

- *What 5 words would best describe your company?*

- *What is the primary message you want to convey to your customers?*

Now, you'll notice these are open-ended, rather than questions like "what colour do you want me to use?" - this is because it gets the client thinking in more depth about their business and brand, something they may have never done.

You'd be surprised how often an interesting story of the companies origin can lead to a great logo that represents their history comes via their answer.

Those technical questions are important but it's the understanding of the company through the more subjective questions that will reap the best rewards in logo design.

I highly recommend Stuarts blog for more great tips and advice on logo design.

Pro Tip 5:
Research & understand the company/ brand

It's somewhat obvious, but you need to know what the company does and why. Find out the history of the company, the products or services offered, and the problem(s) they solve.

Look to understand the company's values. What message is the client trying to communicate with its target audience, and how does it want to feel when they engage with the brand? This will often heavily influence the attitude of the design.

Pro Tip 6: Research the competition

Knowing the competition is valuable as you can learn what identities the audience will already be familiar with in the sector. This information will also ensure you avoid unintentionally mimicking an already known brand.

Pinpointing competitors isn't always an easy task. Sometimes the client will tell you who they believe they are in competition with, but their assessment may be way off. Combine the information they provide with your own research. Look at the identities of direct competitors (those who offer the same product or service to the same audience) as well as indirect (those that offer a similar product or service).

Your goal is to design a logo that separates the company from its competition rather than to replicate it. It's a valuable exercise to keep a visual record of both the competitor's logos and identities to reference your designs against at a later date.

Pro Tip 7: Research the audience

You must know the audience the business will be targeting so that you can design a logo that will attract them.

Some companies will be able to describe their exact audience, whilst some smaller companies will not be sure, or may ask to target everyone. In these cases I ask the client to describe their ideal customer.

Understand the demographics of the audience: their age, gender, location, income level, lifestyle, behavior etc. Understand their needs and the problems they are experiencing to require the products or services of the company you're designing for.

Pro Tip 8:
Understand where and how the design will be used

We can easily make a few assumptions about where a logo could be used; for example, on a website, social media, on a business card and letterhead, and on a shop exterior. But from business to business there might be some specific size restrictions or scenarios that need to be considered during the design process, so it's important to find out the facts.

Pro Tip 9:
Understand logo design trends, but don't follow them

In the fashion world it's great to be following the trends, especially in our style driven world. In the world of logo design however this is not the case. Following design trends mean you blend into the crowd. Your goal is to design a timeless logo that assists recognition - avoid trends and you stand a chance of succeeding.

Another side of effect of following trends is that your design dates. You just need to look at this old Radio Shack logo design of the 70s to understand this…

So how do you know what the trends are? Every year, Bill Gardner over at Logo Lounge puts a report together highlighting the years logo design trends. He does this by collating all the submitted logos to his Logo Lounge database from the past year, then putting them together one by one into related groups. Each 'new' group, which has not seen before is deemed as a trend.

I love checking out the report – I find it's inspiring/interesting, but remember to use the report as information rather than a guide you need to follow.

Pro Tip 10:
Understand when and why to redesign

The obvious reason to redesign a logo is because the original looks unprofessional, dated or in need of refinement. In these cases the client has designed the logo themselves, or cut corners to avoid costs and used an inexperienced designer, or a terrible online logo generator. In these cases, the research you carry out will dictate how dramatic the change will need to be.

Another reason to redesign a logo (even a good one that's highly recognizable) is to signify change in the business. This could be a new mission, a merger or acquisition. The launch of a redesigned visual identity will put a spotlight on the company and can energize employees. How drastic the logo changes depends on how dramatic the business brand/mission/goals change.

Pro Tip 11:
Don't confuse logo and brand

A lot of people, including designers refer to their logo as their brand, but it's not. A logo is a symbol. An identifier.

Some others think a brand is your logo along with all the other visual elements, including signage, literature and a website, but that's not right either. These elements form the brand identity – all strategically designed to communicate the companies mission, vision and values, and to target the desired audience.

So what is a brand?

This quote from Jeff Bezos of Amazon sums it up:

"Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room."

Your brand is how others feel about you – almost like a file stored in the mind as a collection of memories. It's something you can influence by clearly communicating who you are and what you're about, by creating meaningful experiences for them, and paying attention to all the "touch-points" of your brand.

The easiest way to understand this is to imagine; if your logo is your "face," then your brand is your personality and your character. It's essentially everything you (or your company) represent.

Part 2: Learning logo design

The tips covered across the following pages will help you to learn the tools and techniques needed to design a logo.

Pro Tip 12:
Watch online design tutorials

One of the easiest ways to learn and improve your logo design skills (or any skills) is by watching online tutorials. Websites such as SkillShare and Lynda learning make it really easy to learn new skills, and both have a large library of logo design and typography tutorials waiting for you.

No matter what level you're at, it's always worth watching tutorials... It's one of the best ways to see new tools, approaches and techniques.

You can get a 3 month premium subscription to SkillShare by clicking here and/or you can sign up to Lynda learning for a free trial here.

Pro Tip 13:
Read good books

Books give you an insight into the thinking and knowledge of some of the greatest people that have ever lived.

I've learned so much from good books, and I strongly believe you will too. Here's a couple of logo design related books I recommend to get you started... they are all crammed full of great content, tips and advice.

- Smashing Logo Design by Gareth Hardy

- Logo Creed by Bill Gardner

- Logo Design Love by David Airey

Pro Tip 14:
Keep up to date with good design blogs

Once you know what you are doing (from books and tutorials), one of the best ways to keep up with the latest logo design developments is by reading good design blogs. Here's a few I enjoy:

- Logo Geek (my blog if you've not seen it)

- Logo Design Love

- The Branding Source

- Creative Bloq (branding section)

- BrandNew (A division of UnderConsideration)

- Design Week (branding section)

- Logo Designer

- The Logo Smith

- Just Creative

- Identity Designed

- Logo Lounge

Part 3:
Coming up with Ideas

The tips covered across the following pages will help you come up with the best logo ideas based on the clients brief.

Pro Tip 15:
Always start on paper

I'm a massive fan of sketchbook work. It's the easiest way to come up with great ideas, and you can take one anywhere you need it (which means I can work outside!). I'm a big fan of Aaron Draplin, and I'm pretty excited that he was able to contribute this tip:

Aaron Draplin

Always start on paper. There's something liberating about the freedom, wobbliness and humanity of a pencil sketch. There's a speed to it. An unpredictability. Accidents happen. You can get to the magic that much faster on paper, than on some cold screen.

Be it a stick in the dirt, charcoal on a cave wall or a pencil in you memo book, you are tapping into the time-tested method of communication, formulating and invention.

And remember to do it in your Field Notes for maximum performance and durability.

Draplin created Field Notes... he also has a book out which is worth checking out.

Pro Tip 16:
Design the 'SMART' way

A logo should be SMART. That's an acronym for Simple, Memorable, Appropriate, Resizable and Timeless.

Read more about each in my blog: 'SMART' logo design principles

Pro Tip 17:
Sketch every single idea...even the bad ones

What I love about a sketchbook is that nobody needs to see it but you. It's your personal book of notes and ideas. That means you can scribble any idea, even the bad ones, and it doesn't matter.

But why draw a bad idea? 2 reasons – It clears your mind of clutter so you can focus, and more importantly, a bad idea once on paper can often spawn a better idea that your mind alone could not see.

Pro Tip 18:
Keep it simple

I asked one of my favorite identity designers, Pentagram partner Michael Bierut to contribute a tip. I didn't expect a reply, but he did! (2 words, but I'm happy with that!)

Michael Bierut

"Simplicity endured"

Whilst being a simple response, this is probably one of the most important rules of design. Simplicity makes a logo design easily recognizable, versatile and memorable.

Designing a simple logo is a challenge. As you have less to work with, every object needs to be positioned perfectly. The way I approach this challenge is to copy and simplify, to refine the design down to it's core. If a feature of the design doesn't serve a purpose, remove it.

Pro Tip 19:
Use online inspiration galleries & books

There are a growing volume of logo design inspiration galleries. Do a Google search and you'll find a lot of them.

I've always found online galleries and books useful to find styles, colours and shapes that capture the essence of the brand you're designing the logo for. It's also useful to find designs to benchmark your work against, and to be surrounded by examples of great design.

A few galleries I've used include; Logo Pond, Logo Lounge *(this is paid, but you can get your work in a book)* and Logo Moose

Pro Tip 20:
Design for the audience, not the client

The client is paying you, but should you design the logo for them? No. Vincent Burkhead of 'Your Creative Junkie' shares his knowledge:

Vincent Burkhead

Don't design for your client, design for THEIR audience. The personal preferences of your client do not apply to the creative challenge at hand.

It's common for a client to have ideas. Occasionally they have good suggestions, but normally they will request a specific style, wish to look like a competitor, or want to replicate another companies style without understanding the implications.

Some designers will design the logo based on the clients specific request, which results in a happy client but is not the best solution long-term. Research their target audience and competition to design a logo that will have more success long term.

Pro Tip 21: Use the Strong Three

Von Glitschka

Logo design when reduced down to it's essence can be categorized into three areas: Concept, Style, Visual Design. All of these of course are related to one another and are influenced by each other. The key is to do all three well.

Concept is the soul of the design, and almost always dictates the style choice to use. Explore the literal (low hanging fruit ideas)but re-imagine them in a new way, also push to dive deep and uncover the non-literal ideas that showcase clever connections related the company, product or services. If a concept is weak, the end design will be less effective and memorable.

Style is what drives design aesthetic and it's continually shifting. Some concepts for a logo can be executed in a variety of styles, but the truth about style is you can also pick the wrong style that will undermine a concept and weaken the overall design.

Visual design comes down to fundamental design skills and craftsmanship, how well you execute the idea and the style you have chosen. Your concept can be strong, your style can be appropriate, but you can execute it poorly and it derails the ultimate potential of the design and it's effectiveness.

When Concept, Style, and Visual Design are each handled well it doesn't produce good design, it produces great design and reflects strength.

Pro Tip 22:
Avoid imitation

If you walked into a supermarket, and there was a row of drinks cans coloured red, what brand would you expect? On how about blue?

With red, I expect you pictured Coca-Cola, and blue, Pepsi Cola.

Every company has competitors, so it's important to understand who they are so you design a logo that stands out from the crowd, rather than be mistaken for another established company.

Pro Tip 23:
Use word association

Word association is a superb way to generate 'out of the box' ideas quickly. Here's how to works:

In the center of a piece of paper jot down a couple of words related to the project. For example, when I designed a logo for the recruitment agency People Code I put down the words: People, Code and Recruitment.

From each word branch out all associated words that you can think of. I find it useful to use a thesaurus when you run out of ideas. Continue to branch out further words from each associated words until you have a web of associated words on the page.

Once you have a complete web, circle those words that could form the basis of a potential design.

Pro Tip 24:
Don't try to be original, just be good.

Paul Rand famously said: "Don't try to be original. Just try to be good." Here's an excellent piece of advice from David Airey, quoted from his blog post 'similar original logos' that expands on this.

David Airey

No matter how clever your idea, there's a good chance that someone has come up with something very similar.

We're all surrounded by the same influences and exposed to the same shapes, forms, and patterns. With the importance of branding in the marketplace, and hundreds of thousands of designers working on similar projects, it's obvious that ideas will, from time to time, look almost identical.

Pro Tip 25:
Don't get stuck on an idea that's not working out

Have you ever had an idea so good that you know it's 'the one', but when it comes to making it a reality you find it's just not working? Rather than spending hours reworking it, move on to the next idea. This quote from Chip Kidd sums this up perfectly:

"Never fall in love with an idea. They're whores: if the one you're with isn't doing the job, there's always, always, always another."

Pro Tip 26:
Reveal the symbolism behind the company

Although simple, if designed well a logo can capture the essence of a brand. This tip from Dina Rodriguez of Lettershoppe expands on this:

Dina Rodriguez

A logo is a visual representation of everything a company stands for. Far beyond a simple, pretty picture, a strong logo is filled with symbolism, both obvious and hidden.

To help figure the symbolism behind the brand, focus on your message by writing ten words that illustrate a business's key benefits. These words can be feelings, adjectives, objects or time periods.

Then, as a fun exercise, use those same descriptive words and illustrate its meaning through typography, decorations, and illustrations.

Pro Tip 27: Use tracing paper

Using tracing paper in your design process is an old-school technique, and not something I use myself, but it can be very useful if you prefer to do the bulk of your design development work on paper before vectorizing.

Tracing paper should be used in conjunction with a normal paper sketchbook. It allows you to quickly create variants of a sketch, meaning you can refine an idea without having to redraw something from scratch, or ruining the idea already drawn.

Pro Tip 28:
Keep a sketchbook by your side

When working on a design project you can easily become so absorbed in your work that you remain thinking about it when you're away from the desk. I frequently think of a good idea whilst driving, when walking, or during the night when trying to sleep. For that reason I keep a sketchbook in my pocket, or at my bedside so I can jot down the idea.

It's so easy to forget stuff, so a sketchbook allows you to keep track of those important ideas and move on with your life.

Pro Tip 29:
Don't expect your logo design to do all the communication

A logo is a single component of a brand identity, so don't feel the need to cram every idea and message within the logo. Keep the logo simple, and let the supporting brand identity expand the communication.

Pro Tip 30:
Don't be afraid to be abstract

If you're designing a logo for a shoe business, don't feel that you need to include a shoe in the logo. It's ok to be a abstract. For example, the Nike logo 'tick' is actually an abstract interpretation of the wing of the Greek Goddess of the same name.

Pro Tip 31:
Remember that logos were once designed by hand

It's important to remember that just over 30 years ago, every logo design was done by hand. Famous logos we love today, including Nike, Starbucks and Coca-Cola were all designed completely by hand.

Illustrator is relatively new in the grand scheme of things, so doing things solely on paper is 'ok' to do. Don't feel the need to create a Vector version of your logo until you're ready – everyone works differently.

Pro Tip 32:
Take a step back & relax

Projects can be stressful, and sometimes you'll hit a dead-end cause of that. David Airey shares his advice.

David Airey

Now and again a project will cause stress — perhaps because it's taking longer than usual to come up with an idea I'm happy to present, or because it's particularly difficult to create consensus around an idea. That's when it helps to take a step back.

I'm not working 12 hour shifts in a coal mine, cleaning sewers, or scavenging for plastic in a landfill site. Remembering that I'm fortunate to be where I am makes graphic design challenges seem like a walk in the park.

Part 4:
Digitising your logo

The tips covered across the following pages will help you turn your logo ideas into print ready scalable vector artwork.

Pro Tip 33:
Use the right software

A logo will be used at a range of sizes, from a tiny favicon, right up to a large scale version of the side of a building. For that reason the artwork must be scalable with no loss of quality. The only way to achieve artwork of this type is with Vector software such as Adobe Illustrator.

Vector images are made up of precise mathematical points, which mean they can be scaled to any size with no loss of quality, whereas raster based image software (such as Photoshop) uses pixels, so the image becomes pixelated as it's increased in size.

The most commonly used vector software is Adobe Illustrator, however there are free alternatives such as Inkscape.

Pro Tip 34:
Copy & modify (keep old versions)

When working on designs in illustrator, when you get to a point where you want to explore alternate versions, copy the design before you make any changes.

Even though you're not 100% happy with that original version it's important to see the stages of development. You may find that you go 2 steps forward, you lose something about the design that you liked. This process allows you to go back 3 steps and rework the design in a different way.

Pro Tip 35:
Set yourself a benchmark

As a designer I believe it's important to set yourself a benchmark to work towards.

I personally aim to create work on par with designers such as Paul Rand, Sal Bass and Michael Beirut of Pentagram, but also use tools such as Pinterest and Dribble to find high quality work by talented designers both young and old.

Find design work that inspires you each and every day, study the design to work out what makes it so good, and allow that work to continually influence your designs.

Pro Tip 36:
Use grids and guides

When working on your logo, use grids and guides to perfect your designs. Brent Galloway shares his knowledge.

Brent Galloway

A logo should be describable, memorable, effective without color, and scalable. To help ensure you design a timeless logo, draw on a grid and try using geometric shapes.

Pro Tip 37:
Understand optical corrections

Although I'm a big fan of grids and guides, sometimes when they are applied things can look kinda wrong...

It sounds counterintuitive, but sometimes for a design to look perfect you need to correct the design by eye. This is common in typography design, but it also applies to logo design too.

In summary... use grids only as a guide, and not a rule.

I go into this in more detail in my blog post: Optical corrections every logo designer should know about

Pro Tip 38:
Understand the meaning behind typography

Typography can be used to help communicate characteristics of a brand. Dina from Lettershoppe expands on this...

Dina Rodriguez

Before you begin sketching concepts, you need to reveal the purpose behind what you're creating. You need to understand what different styles of typography mean and how to use it to evoke an emotional reaction in your audience.

For example, if you want your company to appear strong, bold, and modern then use a clean typeface similar to Open Sans or Helvetica. Understanding the meaning of certain types of letters and how they can uniquely represent your company will help you decide which typography is best suited for your logo design.

Pro Tip 39:
Design with single colour in mind

A logo should be designed to work in single colour. Why? Because a logo must be versatile, and there are still a lot of instances where single colour matters. For example; receipts, frosted vinyl, single colour documents, Engraving and embossing

It's ok to design a logo using multiple colours, but in these instances it's essential that you create a single colour variant for situations where it could be needed.

Pro Tip 40:
Modify an existing typeface

If you're looking to create a unique typeface it's ok to use and modify an existing one. Jacob Cass of Just Creative expands on this:

Jacob Cass

Don't be afraid to customize your type. Customizing an out-of-the-box typeface gives your logo a distinct look making for a more unique and memorable identity.

Pro Tip 41:
Buy and use good fonts

Typography is an essential part of a good logo design, meaning that your font collection needs to be first class. There's a few good free commercially usable fonts out there, but it's worth putting down some money and investing in your own font collection.

The reality of most free fonts is that they are free for personal use only, meaning they are not ideal for logo design.

To build up a collection of fonts without flushing away my profits I get my free commercial fonts from Font Squirrel. I also frequently purchase low cost font bundles from DesignCuts, who occasionally offer a large collection of high quality fonts normally worth $2000 for only $29.

A quick search for "free commercial fonts" and you'll find plenty more.

Pro Tip 42:
Test your logo

To test and present my designs I typically use a plugin for Adobe Illustrator called LiveSurface. That's how I made the images shown below for my portfolio.

LiveSurface is a Mac application that integrates directly into Illustrator, enabling you to visualize your design ideas in the real world without leaving the illustrator interface. There is a small monthly fee, but the method is so quick and easy I've made it my go-to application for this purpose. (Send me an email before you sign up, and I can get you 15% off your first month: ian@logogeek.co.uk)

There are a number of companies and designers out there that create Photoshop mock-ups of branding material that you can easily buy to apply your design work to. Most of these templates use smart objects, meaning you can easily swap out the content of the object and have it automatically be applied to the image with all the required effects already applied. Just search Google for PSD branding mock-ups and you'll find loads of examples…

Pro Tip 43:
Include an incubation period

Design is a very personal and intimate process. You can be working on a design for several hours without a break.

You might love the design you've done, but I seriously suggest spending time away from the design so you can see it with a fresh pair of eyes.

In my design career I've found this to be an immensely valuable step of the process to ensure I create work of a high standard. Almost every time I have done this, despite being very happy with the design the day before, I normally always make minor refinements upon viewing the design a day later.

A logo design is (hopefully) around for a long time, so I recommend trying this so you see that design with pride, rather than regret.

Part 5: Presenting your designs

The tips covered across the following pages will help you present your designs professionally to get faster approvals.

Pro Tip 44:
Avoid asking "what do you think?"

The below has been taken from a recent blog post on mine: 'How to present logo design'

The best way to get better at something is to screw up… I've done this many times, and (try to) learn from my experiences. I've had clients treat me like a puppet and I watch as they use me to ruin my beautiful designs! Now however I know it was actually my fault as I was presenting in the wrong way…

In my day job at a web agency I've seen new people make the same mistakes as I did, so I introduced a short training session with new designers and Account Managers to help fix the problem. As part of this session I briefly explain how to present design. Using a stapler as an example (normally because there is one on my desk), then I present it to them in two ways.

Presentation approach one…

Firstly I put the stapler down on the table, tell them that I've designed a stapler for them as requested, and then ask "what do you think?".


People will often pick up the stapler looking for problems, looking for things they don't like. They will then start suggesting ideas of their own based on personal preference.

Asking 'what do you think?' is presentation killer – avoid it!

Asking 'what do you think?' is a question that can cause big problems, and is sadly the first question most people ask when presenting designs to anyone. Remove it from your vocabulary – asking this question will cause a slippery slide where you will lose all control of the designs, and see your identity work ruined. It doesn't matter what they think!

Lets present the stapler again...

This time I talk through the features based on goals. I explain that it's easy to hold in one hand, that it's effortless to staple 20 sheets of paper, that it's easy to reload and that it's designed to be easily manufactured at a low cost per unit.
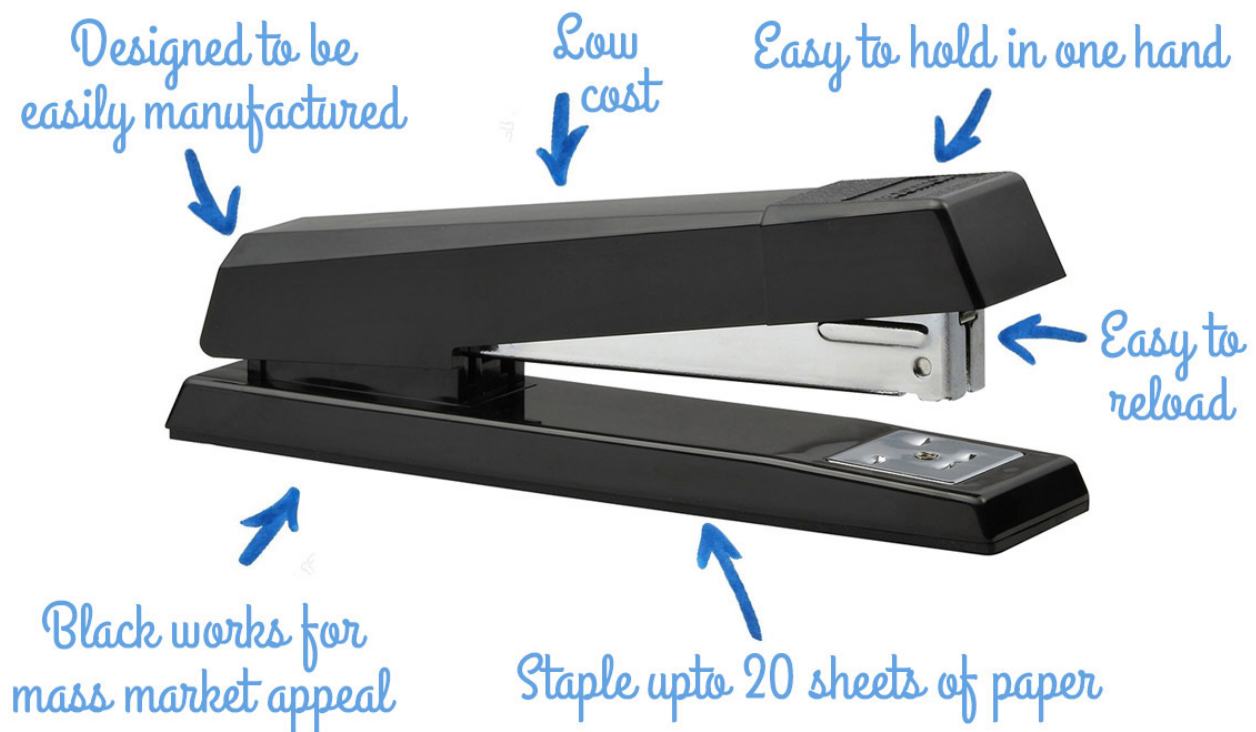
I then ask "do you agree that this meets the goals we agreed upon?". This often results in a very clear yes. This approach also sets a tone for feedback – if for whatever reason it fails in any way to meet goals you will get constructive feedback that will help you to find an alternative (often better) solution. It also means you remain in control of the design.

That's a massive difference.

The first approach means you come away with a list of changes, yet the second you come away with an agreed logo design...

Part 6: Preparing the files

The tips covered across the following pages will help you prepare the logo files to send to the client.

Pro Tip 45:
Deliver the correct files

Once the logo is complete you will need to prepare and supply a number of different file types for different purposes. These should include:

Vector (ai, PDF and EPS)

- A CMYK version

- A Pantone colour version

- A black, single Colour version

- A White version

Raster Files (in RGB)

- Jpeg

- PNG

Logo Variants (optional)

- Lock-up variants

- Smaller size variants

For a more in-depth explanation of logo files, take a look at my blog post: A designers guide to creating logo files

Pro Tip 46:
When designing a white version reduce the weight

Something weird happens when you invert your logo and use it on a dark background. An optical illusion happens known as irradiation phenomenon, whereby the white version looks 10% larger. To counteract this illusion, it's important to slightly reduce the overall weight of the logo.

The easiest approach is to add a stroke to the artwork (the weight depends on the design, so needs to be judged by eye), then outlining the stroke before using the Pathfinder tool to remove the excess weight.

Pro Tip 47:
Create lock-ups when possible

A lock-up is the term used to describe the layout of a logo, with icon, type and tagline all together. To ensure the logo is versatile it's important to create lock-up variants.

If the logo makes use of an icon with supporting type it's possible to create a version with the icon to the left (or right). Alternatively the icon can be positioned above the type, meaning the logo has greater impact on areas where the space available is taller.

By making variants like this, the logo can look it's best in as many instances as possible.

Pro Tip 48:
Create files for both web and print

Files for web and print need to be treated slightly differently...

For starters, web uses RGB (Red, Green, Blue) colours, meaning all colours mix to make white, whilst print uses CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) – mix all the colours and you get black.

Web based work is typically 72 dots per inch (DPI), whilst print resolution is at least 300 DPI.

For print I recommend providing vector based files, which will print 100% sharp, no matter what size they are printed.

For web and screen use I recommend providing Jpeg files. If transparency is needed I provide PNG files.

Vector files can also be used online, meaning they look super sharp on retina screens, but in this case they need to be SVG files. If you save from Adobe Illustrator I recommend using SVGO to clean up the files https://github.com/svg/svgo-gui

Pro Tip 49:
Create a style guide

When you provide logo files I recommend also including a style guide document.

A style guide document should explain how the logo will be used, what supporting fonts and colours can be used, and more importantly, how it shouldn't be used.

Some style guides also include more in-depth brand identity rules, including how content should be written, and how images should be used.

There's no set rules, so even a simple guide can help to ensure the logo is used properly once in the hands of the client, and/or other designers.

Here's a few useful references worth looking at:

• http://www.logodesignlove.com/brand-identity-style-guides

• http://saijogeorge.com/brand-style-guide-examples/

• https://designschool.canva.com/blog/50-meticulous-style-guides-every-startup-see-launching/

Pro Tip 50:
Sell your process, not a logo

The final tip is a really important one... when you are selling your services as a logo designer, it's important to remember that they are not simply buying a logo - they are buying your process and skills. Kyle Courtright expands on this...

Kyle Courtright

I hear it all the time, "What does a logo cost?"

The answer is centered around one concept: Value.

One way you can provide value is to establish trust.

I'm always transparent with potential clients from the onset.

I'll tell them, "If you're looking for the cheapest logo designer out there, then I'm not the best fit for your project. But, if you're looking for a quality, iconic logo you'll have many years down the road, then the fit is right."

Do you see what happened in that conversation?

A higher level of trust and value were established simultaneously in two short sentences. I'm not trying to use psychological techniques here — just some good old fashioned honesty...and I've seen my conversion rates absolutely skyrocket as a result.

It's the same reason why many of us have issues with the used car salesman or the telemarketer. No trust or value have been established and we can tend to get annoyed pretty quickly.

Try this simple, but impactful tip and prepare to reap the positive benefits.

Bonus Tip:
Get the Project Prescription

When I first started out I spent hours creating my own forms and documents as part of my design process. Thankfully now your time can be saved thanks to a product I came across only recently.

It's called Project Prescription, and I bought it almost immediately.

From start to finish of any client project, you've got to provide documents to clients that help you stand out, get paid, and keep every project on track.

With over 25 years of combined experience behind it, The Project Prescription is a set of digital documents that enable you to bypass the trial and error of developing a process of working with clients.

This isn't theory about what might work, it's hard data from the trenches on what does work. And now the creators are sharing exactly what you need to do the same in gorgeous documents, checklists and processes.

It'll save you hours. Check it out.

A Special Thank You

Firstly a big thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope the advice is of value, and you become a better designer for it.

If you haven't already, please join me on twitter for a daily dose of logo design inspiration, news and advice, so I can continue to help you develop and improve.

Secondly, thank you to all the amazing designers who contributed to this eBook to make it special. I value every one of you as experts, and as friends, and I look forward to our next exciting project together...

Take care everyone! Keep learning, keep improving...

All the best,

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Join the Logo Geek Community

The Logo Geek Community is a free Facebook group and is the place for graphic designers to 'geek out' about logos, get feedback, learn, improve, and most importantly... meet other likeminded designers, who will become friends and mentors.

To join just visit:

https://logogeek.uk/community